



HOW TO PLAN YOUR EARLY YEARS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

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ASC

CAVEAT: THIS WILL MOSTLY DEAL WITH THE CIVIL SIDE. AND A PERSONAL CAVEAT.

I have not worked on the Criminal law side of the Bar, so, I speak from my experience on the Civil/ Constitutional/ Commercial side. However, a lot of the following advice should be applicable to the Criminal law side.

Moreover, I confess I do speak from a place of privilege; being a third generation lawyer, I did have it easy in some respects (pakki pakai kheer), but I do speak all of the following from a place of experience as well. I have worked with and trained a lot of associates of all levels of competence, class, skills and degrees of success and have analyzed the same.

If I am blunt or brutally straightforward, or seem to be lecturing down to you, it is because I see a lot of my younger colleagues lost, directionless in the professional and getting more and more resentful as a consequence of not getting anywhere.

LAST YEAR IN LAW COLLEGE

Internship

Develop contacts with an eye towards job placement

WHY PLAN?

Well planned is half done



THE PLAN

Write on a piece of paper how you see next five years in your career going.

Ask yourself how you will achieve these? How will you achieve that?

This will let you think things through and give you focus.

Expect to be flexible with the plan too.

Expect disappointments, revisions, etc.

THE TWO SIDES OF LAW

1. Bench: Aim for judicial posts and examination
2. Bar:
 - (a) Aim for a life of legal practice
 - (b) After some years of practice, aim for Bench
 - (c) Teaching and other related professions

WHAT TYPE OF LAW? WHERE TO SPECIALIZE

In the earlier years, do not choose. Get whatever work you can get.

Your direction will be determined by the cases you get.

Make sure that you do not limit yourself, especially into specialist fields which by their nature are quite limited.

WHAT SORT OF A CHAMBER TO AIM FOR TO START WITH?

Where you can get a lot of work at the Trial Court level.

Where you will get an opportunity to be hands on.



DO NOT...

Do not expect; deserve.

Do not expect to be taught; make an effort to learn.

Do not expect someone will continually sit you down and teach.

Do not fail to use your own brain. That is what you are there to train.

Do not make the same mistake again.

Do not ever appear non-serious or irresponsible.

Do not ever make excuses.

FOCUS ON SKILLS REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH CASES YOU ARE LIKELY TO GET YOURSELF AT THE START OF YOUR CAREER

Do not go for the elite skills for work you are not likely to get.

Do not join a person whose work is principally in the Supreme Court.

Do not be a file carrier.

HOW TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE & GENERATE WORK

Write and publish articles.

Add email address to pieces.

Linkedin

Facebook

Social media work generation.

Televisions

High profile cases



ANALYSE YOURSELF AND YOUR POSITION

Analyse your strengths

Analyse your weaknesses

Analyse your position and contacts

Be honest with yourself

Plan what needs to improve

And how will you improve the same.

**THE ONLY PERSON WHO WILL ULTIMATELY HELP
YOU IS...**



MONEY MATTERS

It really does not matter in initial years. Only doing a lot of work matters.

Expect exploitation.

LLM ? BAR?

Depends on what exposure you have and what are your finances.

What will it add to you?

Can you afford to put in a break in your career?

If you have done an external LLB, are you not delaying learning Pakistani law even more?

Bar is possibly the most useful certificate as it is practical training; however it is still not essential.

ARE YOU A LAWYER'S RELATIVE?

Unfortunately, it helps.

Most chambers will only make children partners and they will always be preferred over regular associates.

CSS?

In a sense background in Law is wasted for qualification, other subjects are more scoring.

However, CSS still offers quite attractive future options.

LAWYER'S CHILDREN

Lawyer's children should not work initially in parent's chamber.

However, lawyer's children should not stay away from parent's chamber too long as well.

SIFARISH?

Might get you in, but your work will speak.

No one will pay you unless you are worth the money you are seeking.

A lawyer requesting another lawyer to take on an associate rarely works unless the persons recommended is a close relative.

GO ABROAD TO WORK?

The Middle East is good hunting grounds especially if one has worked with people settled abroad.

UK also offers opportunities. Ask for colleagues who have settled there.



TIME

The time you waste will not come back and it will only hurt you and no one else.

Everyone except your family will let you waste your time; your family will turn the wasted time into extra pressure for you.

WHERE DO YOU WORK AFTER THE INITIAL PERIOD?

Big City ?

Hometown?

Go where the clients are.



NON LITIGATION RELATED JOBS

Non-advocacy related jobs

In-house lawyers

Advisorship

Teaching

STAY AWAY FROM THE CORPORATE CHAMBER OR HIGH PROFILE CHAMBER INITIALLY OR EVEN THE POLITICAL CHAMBER

These chambers really contribute to initial growth and deal in work you are not likely to get at all in your early years.

Even work they get you to do, will unlikely benefit you directly. Unless you are an essential part of their litigation team.

A SITTING JUDGE'S EX-CHAMBER

A young colleague just asked me to get him placed in several recently elevated judges old chambers. What were his considerations?

Think the problem through.

Go for work, not name.

Clients will stay with name and are not likely to leave with you.



BAR POLITICS

Stay away for the initial years.

Do not be used as election fodder.

Participate but do not let it be all that you do.

BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Register

Study journals regularly. Read them like short stories.

See what you would have done.

Anticipate what you would have argued.

Prepare cases in the chambers you work in.

Familiarise yourself with files in detail. What they look like, etc.

Keep eyes and ears open in courts.



HOW TO GET CLIENTS IN EARLIER YEARS

Through Family and Circle of Friends and Acquaintances

Through legal ex-bosses, teachers.

Word of mouth

GENERAL POLITICS AND ARC OF CAREER

Law officers and political parties.

Avoid in early years unless you think these will get you in with government side.

WHEN TO MOVE ON FROM ASSOCIATESHIP INTO PRIVATE PRACTICE?

Before you move out of a chamber, try to get clients of your own before leaving.

Without clients, it is silliness to jump ship.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A DECENT AMOUNT OF CLIENTS BEFORE YOU GO INTO SOLO PRACTICE

Electricity bills are to be paid. Rent too.

PARTNERSHIP OR SOLO PRACTICE

Always prefer partnership if you have a reliable partner starting off. Costs will be split.

Solo practice when you have the ability to pay costs.



MARRIAGE AND THE ARC OF THE CAREER

So when does one get married?

When are the kids to be expected?

PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND PERSONAL LIFE

Marriage and family follows.

Earning ability is essential.



AGING PARENTS. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone has them. It is part of growing up.

A well-planned career will assist you in dealing with this stuff.

CONTACT

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